

THE WILL OF GOD.

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I am under obligations to my critics for furnishing me from time to time with food for thought, and topics to write upon. The above caption was suggested to me by a recent tirade against some plain Bible truth.

I have always been under the impression that the WILL of God was clearly revealed in His word, (the Bible) and I think so yet, but every now and then I come across individuals who are perplexed on this point; I can only account for this upon the hypothesis that they must be in doubt as to the truth, or inspiration of the Bible. If plain, clear statements of promises and commandments do not convey the WILL of God to the minds of men I fail to see how it would be possible to communicate His WILL.

The WILL of God is so variously expressed upon every aspect of human life that it would be useless for me to attempt to give a complete account of it in a short newspaper article. I shall therefore only notice a few points, which I trust will be sufficient to show to every intelligent and sincere reader that we must accept the whole Bible, or invalidate the whole; if any part of it is not true who is to say which is true, and which is not true? If any part of it does not mean what it says, who is to say what it does mean?

When the Lord commands men everywhere to *believe*, I take for-granted that it is the WILL of God that they should exercise faith in His saving power; when He commands them to repent I take for-granted that it is His will that they should *repent*; when He commands them to be baptized I understand that it is His will that they should be *baptized*, and not sprinkled; baptism is one thing, sprinkling is another, and if it had been the WILL of God that either infants or adults should be sprinkled He would have said so; to attribute such a reckless disregard of the proper use of terms to the Almighty, all-knowing God makes mere, misnomers of His accredited characteristics.

When as a sequel to faith, repentance, and baptism, the Lord promises to forgive sin, I learn that it is the will of God to pardon sin. When the Master says that we "ought to wash one another's feet" I take for-granted that it is the WILL of God that we should just do that very thing, and not merely imagine we are humble enough to do it. So far I am on perfectly orthodox, undisputed ground as far as "Dunkardism" is concerned. I can almost hear the "Amen's" from one end of our churches to the other, but now let us look at some scripture calculated to prove

whether we have *really* believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, whether we have *really* repented, turned away from our sins, whether we have really been buried with Christ in baptism. The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul tells men to give their bodies a *living sacrifice* unto God which is their reasonable service. I take for-granted that it is the WILL of God that men should do that very thing; give their bodies a living sacrifice. Theoretically this injunction is very generally accepted, but practically, disregarded. To sacrifice means to give away, or to surrender; if our bodies are surrendered, or sacrificed to God how much whiskey, beer, tobacco, snuff, or chewing gum will it take to supply them? If our bodies are given a living sacrifice unto God how much jewelry, how many diamonds, how many feathers, how much ribbon, or how many yards of silk for sleeves will it take to dress them? If our bodies are surrendered to God, will they go to the ball-room, the theatre, the rum-shops, the horse races, gambling dens, or any other places of questionable propriety? If our bodies are surrendered to God how many farms, how many houses, how many stocks, or bonds in short, how much money will it take to keep them? These questions present to us practical tests as to whether we are much concerned about the WILL of God.

Again when Paul tells us that we should not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the *renewing of our minds* I take for-granted he means what he says. But lo, many think and teach that we should change our clothes from one fashion to another; when the mind is renewed, the clothe question will adjust itself just as naturally as wool will grow on a sheep, bristles on a pig, or stickers or quills on a porcupine. A Christian will dress like a Christian, a lady of the world in the fashions of the day, and a dude like a fool regardless of what men say, or do. Let us keep the will of God in mind in the terms that it is given to us, and not put our own construction upon it.

When the Word of God says "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" I take for-granted that it is His will to do that very thing, regardless of sex, color, nationality, position, condition or relationship provided one stands or seeks to stand in a saved relationship with Him. When the will of God is once clearly expressed upon any point it must stand in its obvious sense unless it is modified, or abrogated by other scripture, otherwise it would not be possible to regard any part of the Bible as absolute truth. The fact that some of the truths expressed in the Bible are rarely manifest

in the world to-day is no argument that it is not the WILL of God that it should be. Let men live, and pray as Elijah did then they will do the works of Elijah.

When I read in prophecy that Jesus was to bear our sickness and pains; when I read that he healed all manner of diseases when in the flesh, when he tells us just before leaving this world that we should "lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover," and when these things are done by his Apostles, and then again commanded by them I take for-granted that it is the *will* of God to heal diseases just the same now as he ever did. These promises stand unlimited and unmodified in the Scriptures, with their fulfillment the Bible stands; with their non-fulfillment (provided the conditions are complied with) the Bible falls as an untruthful book.

It is difficult to understand why apparently honest, sincere believers in the Bible fail to see the will of God expressed in explicit commandments and promises, and then imagine other things to be His will which are not mentioned at all in Scripture; for instance infant baptism is not only not commanded, but cannot be sensibly inferred from a single passage in the New Testament, moreover it is opposed to the very spirit, and genius of the Scriptures, because they teach preeminently that *believers* are to be baptized; infants cannot believe, and no one is commissioned to believe for them. Then again sprinkling is regarded as baptism with not a word of Scripture to justify it; and sickness and premature death are regarded as the will of God with no more Scripture to justify such conclusions than there is for infant baptism, or sprinkling for baptism.

Sickness may be permitted for correction, just as other trials are for the working out of patience, but God tempts no one to do evil, neither is it His will that any should be sick. He told the Israelites if they would behave themselves properly, He would be their healer, if not, He would let the diseases of the Egyptians come upon them. *He is the same to-day.* If any feel impressed with the fact that they are sick because of some special sin it is the will of God that such should repent and get well, and then glorify Him for pardon and restoration. It is not the *will* of a loving parent to punish a child but sometimes it is necessary to do so for the good of the child, just so with God's dear children.

It is a strange, incomprehensible fact that most of those who attribute their diseases to the will of God, are continually trying to set aside His (supposed) will by resorting to doctors and medicine. Humble followers of the Master should at